



The “Dukeries” around Sønderborg

An Early-Modern Manorial Landscape Between Scandinavia and Germany

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Introduction

The Duchy of Schleswig, the renowned and contested region between Denmark and northern Germany, has a fascinating landscape history. The area around the town of Sønderborg in the Duchy of Schleswig, for example, was organized into between one and four large estates at various times over the early-modern period. In formal terms their status varied from that of a principality with some limited sovereignty to that of a royal district or a large entailed estate, but their administrative structure and functions were largely similar. I have invented the Danish word “*hertuggodser*” for this group of estates and will for the purpose of this chapter borrow the largely obsolete English term “dukeries”. The dukeries around Sønderborg were an important structuring feature in the area, but besides the four central castles and palaces, relatively few traces of these large estates are visible in the present landscape. They emerged rather suddenly, blossomed for two or three centuries and disappeared. During their prime, however, they were large, though not typical, examples of a manorial system and landscape bridging Scandinavia and Germany.¹

Sønderborg Castle There has been a castle in Sønderborg for 800 years. Between 1564 and 1622, it was the centre of the whole area of the ‘dukeries’, and after 1622 it was one of them. The outer walls are medieval, the building block is from the Renaissance, but the present appearance is Baroque, the result of a restoration and modernization in the early-eighteenth century. (Photo: Søren Petersen / Museum of Southern Jutland)

The Scandinavian *herregård* and its North German Cousins

The institution of the *herregård* lies at the heart of Scandinavian manors in every sense; literally, it means “lord’s farm”. *Herregård* was a popular and rather colloquial term. Other, more formal terms coexisted. One was that

of *sædegård* meaning “residential farm” or “seat”. In Swedish the word transformed into *säteri*, which has a more abstract ring. A third term is *hovedgård* or “capital farm”, presumably developed from the latin *curia principalis*. Much effort has been wasted on finding the difference between a *herregård*, *sædegård* and *hovedgård*. In reality they were synonyms, used in different contexts: *herregård* was primarily a colloquial term often associated with grand buildings, *sædegård* mainly a legal term; and *hovedgård* an economic one.²

Central is the fact that all these terms – except the Swedish derivation *säteri* – contain the word *gård* which means farm. It reflects the fact that the Scandinavian noblemen generally resided on a farm and before the mid-seventeenth century farmed it themselves. The *herregård* (or *hovedgård* or *sædegård*) was the lord’s own farm, as opposed to the peasant farms he would own, but not farm himself.

These lordly farms were gradually freed of almost all public burdens. In Denmark they were exempt from ground taxes from the Middle Ages, and they were also relieved of church tithes from 1536. On that occasion, a form of legal definition was given: the farm was a *hovedgård* if the nobleman farmed it at his own risk and either resided there or administered the farm via a resident bailiff. These rules also applied to Norway, while in Sweden a partial liberation from tithes was achieved in 1600, and liberation from other burdens was gradually expanded in the sixteenth and early-seventeenth centuries.³

Three characteristics are important to the definition. The first is the relation to the nobility, which was both in Denmark and more generally in Scandinavia, the German states, and Poland, a well-defined estate of people enjoying legal privileges, acquired through noble birth. A farm was a *herregård* because it was the farm a nobleman used for himself. The second key characteristic is the triple function as residence, administrative seat and farm.

The third characteristic concerns legal privileges which were, however, derived from the other two. The archetypal *herregård* was thus a farm where the lord resided, which he farmed himself, and which he used as a centre of lordship over dependant peasant farms. It was both a unit of production and consumption and thus at the same time an asset and a burden in economic terms. It was also a legally privileged farm. Wealthy lords could, however, have more than one. Consequently the residential function could be very limited at times, but the farm kept its status if the other requirements were met, and a bailiff took the lord’s place.



Gammelgaard in Prospect.

Before the mid-seventeenth century, the definition was clear and coherent, but the status of individual farms was fluid, as it depended on the farm's function in relation to its noble owner. Over the course of the seventeenth century status and function became less automatically related to nobles as landownership was opened to other groups in Denmark and Norway, and as nobles became more inclined to lease the capital farms to tenants, albeit on different terms to those of traditional tenant farms. This made a definition derived from the relation to the owner increasingly difficult to maintain, and instead, the legal status of particular farms tended to be frozen at the end of the century throughout Scandinavia. In Denmark, the functional and legal distinction between *herregårde* and other farms remained fairly clear and coherent, whereas a more complex continuum emerged in Sweden.⁴ What remained was the double character of the *herregård* as a productive farm and a seat of some kind of lordship.

Whereas *sædegård* and *hovedgård* are synonyms of *herregård*, the antonym was *bondegård* or “peasant farm”. The *bondegård* was a farm inhabited and farmed by a “bonde” or peasant, a member of the unprivileged rural population who paid tithes and in most cases also crown taxes. A considerable

5.1 | Drawing of Gammelgaard in the seventeenth century

Gammelgaard was one of the largest of the capital farms of the ‘dukeries’. The manor house is in the centre of the drawing. To the left are the farm buildings, with the impressive roof of the barn furthest to the left. Behind this farm was the stable-yard with service buildings, only visible here as a spire above the roof of one of the farm buildings. To the right of the main house is a gatehouse. The secondary demesne of Gundestrup is in the right foreground. (Danish National Archives, Aabenraa)

though varying proportion of these *bondegårde* were tenant farms owned by the nobility or other privileged landlords. They owed their lords both rent and labour service, and were subject to highly varying forms of lordship.⁵

Rents and dues from such tenants were often paid at the *herregård* to which labour service was also owed, and lordship was exercised from there. Consequently, the *herregård* was the centre of a network of dependant peasant farms and cottages. For this total manorial entity the term *gods* came to prevail. Basically it means property, as in the Latin word *bonum*, with which it was often translated, but it emerged as the term for a complex of property, normally centred on a *herregård*.⁶ In the sixteenth century these complexes were far from stable in constitution, but gradually they became more so. The total manor was named after the *herregård*: Gammel Estrup *herregård* – or capital farm – for example, was the centre of Gammel Estrup *gods* or manor.

The terminology of the manorial system with *herregård* as the key term is unique to Scandinavia, but the manorial system was not. In a large part of northeastern Europe lordly farms were both residences, farms, and seats of administration and authority over peasants. However, there is no specific word for lordly farm in German. In Schleswig-Holstein during the sixteenth century it was mostly simply called *Hof* (farm), but gradually the word *Gut* came to prevail, as it did throughout Germany and designated the capital farm as well as the total manor.⁷ *Gut* has the same linguistic root as *gods* or *bonum*, simply meaning “property”, and its use for both the lordly farm and the depending peasant villages probably reflects a tendency to see the latter as necessary dependencies of the former. Occasionally the former could still be called *Hof* when people wanted to be specific. In a description of the manors Noer and Grönwohld from 1764, the word *Gut* was generally used to mean both capital farm and manor, but in one situation the capital farms are still referred to as *Hof*, obviously because some kind of distinction was needed.⁸ It was not until the nineteenth century that the term *Gutshof* – manor farm – became common.⁹

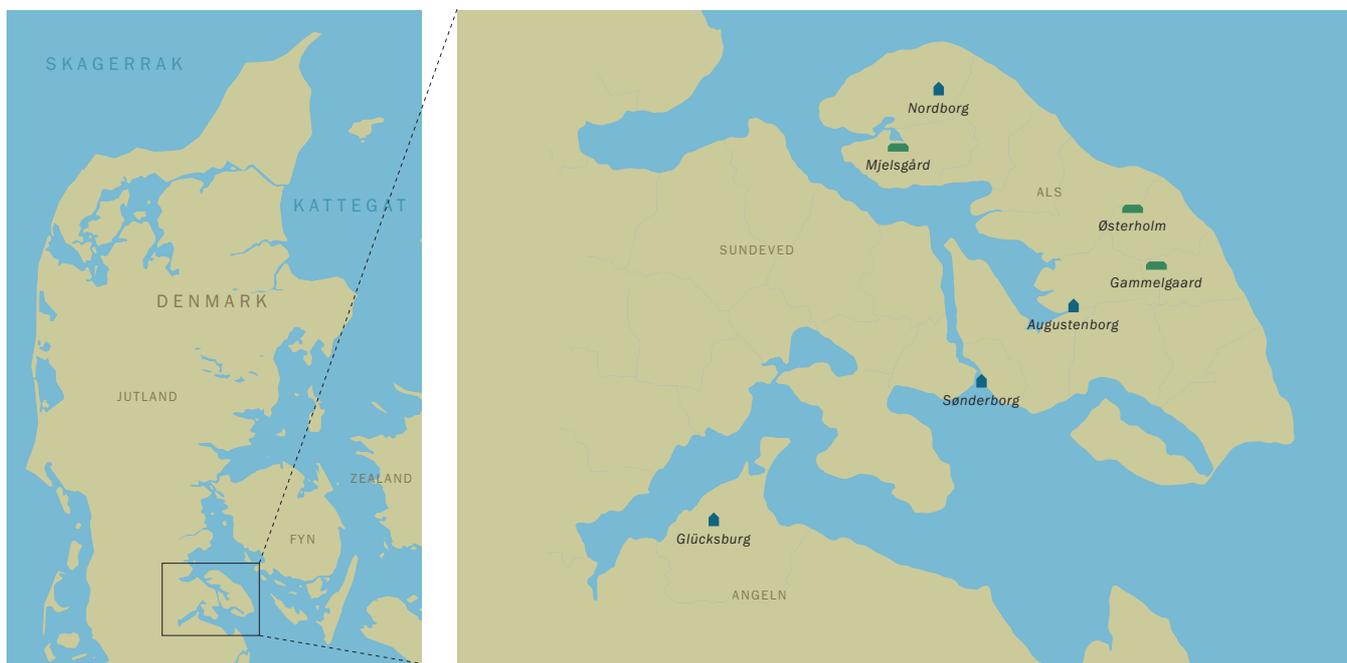
Definitions and Model

There are no colloquial English counterparts of words like *herregård* for the simple reason that a similar institution is unknown at the British Isles after the Middle Ages. Researchers of early-modern history in eastern –

and central Europe often use the word “demesne” which is the medieval English term for the land under direct control of the lord, as there are obvious similarities between manorial systems of England in the high Middle Ages and later systems of eastern and central Europe. For the purpose of this chapter, the term “demesne” will be used as a general term for the lord’s farms and their role in the economy, but “capital farm” will refer to the specific lordly farms serving both as large farms and as centres of lordship over dependant peasants, what in Danish would be *herregårde* or *hovedgårde*. The term manor will be used to refer to the totality of a capital farm and its dependent peasants.

The model of a central lordly farm serving both as a centre of production and lordship prevailed over most of the northeastern quarter of Europe. For this form of manor German researchers have developed the concept of *Gutsherrschaft*, recently translated into English as “demesne lordship”. There are many variations of the concept, but generally it covers a manorial system economically centred on a demesne farmed to some degree with unpaid labour service of dependent peasants. It is used in conjunction with landlords holding legal authority over peasants who were often subject to various forms of bondage.¹⁰

Within this model five characteristics might be profitably explored: the first three are variations of classical themes of the *Gutsherrschaft* research, the latter two are less typical focus points. The first aspect is the degree of demesne economy. The heart of the concept of *Gutsherrschaft* has always been the demesne-centred economy. Important questions here are the relative and absolute size of lordly demesnes versus peasant farms, the significance of demesnes for the manorial economy, and the importance of labour service from peasants for the running of these demesnes on the one hand, and its weight in relation to other forms of rent on the other. The second aspect is the legal and administrative authority of the lord. It concerns not only judicial powers, but also in a broader sense the degree of lordly authority, both in relation to the peasant commune and to the “state” or princely power and its local and regional agents. The third aspect is the composition and status of the peasant population. International research has, in part, focused strongly on the concept of “second serfdom” that emerged in much of Eastern Europe roughly from 1500 to around 1650. Serfdom or *Leibeigenschaft* comprised a bondage tying people to the manor where they were born and lordly consent to marriage and choice of occupation.¹¹ It mattered, but was never the only key issue. Besides bondage, tenure was



5.2 | Als and Sundeved

Shown on the map are the main seats of the four 'dukeries', some capital farms and other locations mentioned in the text.

another central part of the landlord-peasant relation. It varied from hereditary tenure to tenancy at will.¹² To this can be added the social composition of the peasant class and the ways it both influenced, and was influenced by, the landlord-peasant relationship. The fourth aspect, to be added, is size. It is not generally addressed in theories of Gutsherrschaft, but it is apparent from several countries that there were a number of differences in the ways small and large manors worked which should be taken into consideration. Finally, there is reason to look at the importance of lordly residence, which is often omitted from general theories of Gutsherrschaft, but which clearly had consequences for both the social operation and visual appearance of manors. The lord was surrounded by a domestic staff in his residence, adding a special component to the social order of manors, and he was potentially visible and accessible to subjects, with residential functions creating the need for grand buildings and formal gardens.

The "dukeries" around Sønderborg

With these aspects in mind, we shall now turn to the study of a very special group of manors, the "dukeries" around Sønderborg. They were situated in the Duchy of Schleswig, which for centuries formed a bridge between

Denmark and Germany in geographical, political, and cultural terms. It was founded as a Danish duchy, but was brought into personal union with the German county (*Grafschaft*) of Holstein from 1375/86. From 1460 onwards, Danish kings were also dukes of Schleswig and Holstein (made a Duchy in 1474), but between 1490 and 1779 they shared the power over the duchies with various other ducal lines, founded as offspring of the royal line.

An extraordinary political model was founded 1490 and was reinstated in 1544 after a short intermission of full royal control. The king and his brother(s) were each given a number of royal districts in Schleswig and Holstein over which they came to rule separately. Princely power, however, also had elements that were exercised jointly by the ruling princes. It comprised all authority over nobles and noble manors, but also a number of other political issues, though no clear statute for that was made. In 1564 the royal branch divided its part of the duchies again. The younger son of Christian III, Hans the Younger, received a share of the royal districts; however, the nobility refused to recognize him as coregent. Consequently he only received those forms of princely authority that were separate and localized to his own districts, but no part of the “joint government”.¹³

Initially the duke's inheritance in Schleswig comprised the castles of Sønderborg and Nordborg with dependent peasants on the islands of Als and Ærø and the peninsula of Sundeved. Later, in 1582, the abbey of Ryd in the region of Angeln across the waters of Flensborg Fjord was added and over the next five years, the duke replaced the abbey buildings with a new castle or palace: Glücksburg. In Als, Ærø and Sundeved the duke's peasants initially lived scattered among other peasants under nobles, a few ecclesiastical institutions, and even other princes. Duke Hans started a systematic process of acquiring these lands in 1571 and managed to gather all lands in Ærø, nearly all in Als, and around 60% of the land in Sundeved under his lordship before 1603, when the process stopped.

At the death of the duke in 1622 his possessions were divided into no less than five small duchies or principalities. Two comprising the areas in Holstein and the island of Ærø have not been included in this study, which concentrates on the areas of Als and Sundeved. Two principalities centred around the castles of Sønderborg and Nordborg divided the island of Als between them from 1622, while a third based in Glücksburg received the possessions in Angeln. These three latter branches of the ducal house further shared among them the possessions in Sundeved. These three duchies largely survived as units until the late-eighteenth century. The ducal line



upon the extinction of the ducal lines. Eventually the ducal district of Augustenborg came to comprise the greater part of the former duchy of Sønderborg, but the royal government only granted the dukes “noble” and not “princely” rights over the estates. Consequently, they were subject to a royal court of appeal, royal legislation, and the royally appointed bishop, but nonetheless the duke retained very considerable authority.

Thus, there were three or four larger units or estates, each centred on a princely castle or palace. Formally they had different statuses: as tiny principalities over which the dukes had some, though not full, political sovereignty, as royal administrative districts, or as a large entailed estate. In reality, the differences were not significant. No matter which formal

5-4 | The division of land between the dukeries after 1764
Detail of an 1825 map by Theodor Gliemann. The Augustenborg estates on Als are outlined in green, the former duchy of Nordborg in red and the former Glücksburg estates in Sundevill in yellow. (After Erik Nørr, Carsten Porskrog Rasmussen & Gerret Liebing Schlaber: Theodor Gliemanns amtskort over hertugdømmet Slesvig)

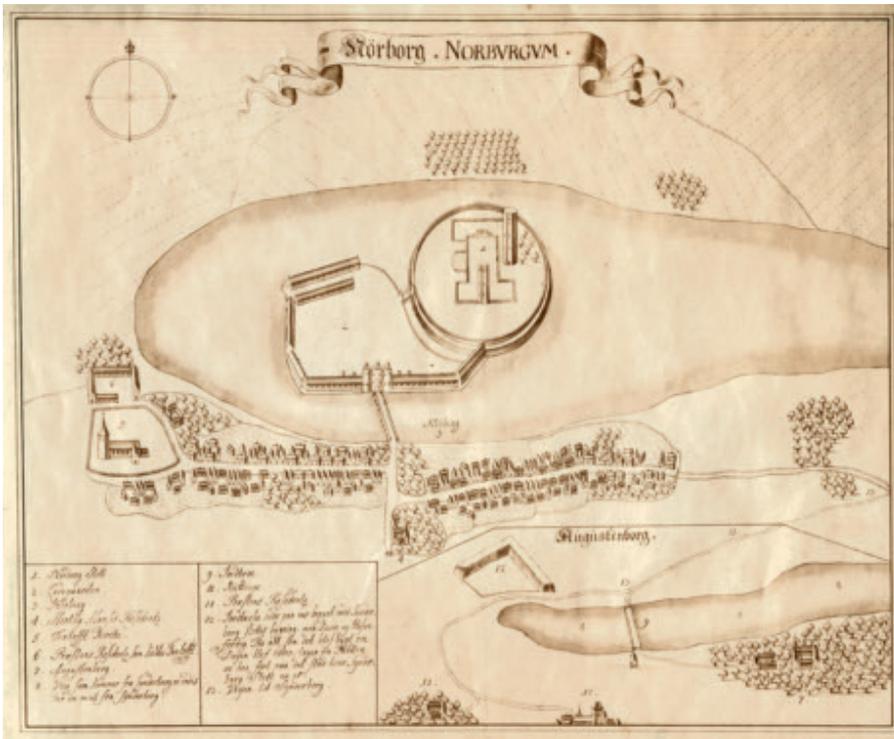
status they had, by Danish standards the “dukeries” were very large estates. In the 1720s, the administrative county and former Duchy of Sønderborg covered c. 15,000 hectares and comprised seven major capital farms, 315 peasant farms, and 247 cottages plus around a further 200 landless families, renting rooms or small cottages from farmers and vicars. At the same time, the duchy of Nordborg comprised c. 12,000 hectares, four capital farms and two secondary demesnes, 253 peasant farms and 147 cottages on the island of Als – plus further land on Ærø, not studied here. The Augustenborg estates on Als grew from c. 3,000 hectares before 1730 to c. 15,000 after 1764, and by 1845 no less than 4,772 persons lived within their boundaries. The duke held a further large estate, Gråsten, on the mainland.

Castles and Palaces

The castles or palaces of Sønderborg, Nordborg and Glücksborg were the principal residences of the respective ducal houses throughout their existence. They had been built or rebuilt in the latter half of the sixteenth century and were reasonably fashionable and up-to-date at the founding of the ducal houses in 1622. Sønderborg was renovated in the baroque style around 1720, and at Nordborg a new but modest palace was built between 1676–78 after the destruction of the old one by fire in 1665, whereas Glücksborg was only modernized internally. None of them were impressive as baroque residences, something which must be explained by the desperate economic situation many of the dukes found themselves in. Only Augustenborg fully entered the world of baroque palaces, but rather late. In the 1660s the first duke had built a four-wing half-timbered house of which little is known, but between 1764–76 his great-grandson replaced it with a large baroque palace, having received vast estates from the crown. The palace was a bit behind the fashions of the time, but nonetheless far grander than the older castles or anything else held by other subjects of the Danish king.¹⁴

A classic work on Danish manorial economy from the seventeenth century describes the ideal Danish manor as comprising buildings organized spatially in two parts: the *borggård* or “castle yard” and *ladegård* or “farm yard”.¹⁵ At princely castles and palaces – and some private manors – a *staldgård* of stables and service buildings for the castle and its staff formed a third, middle part.

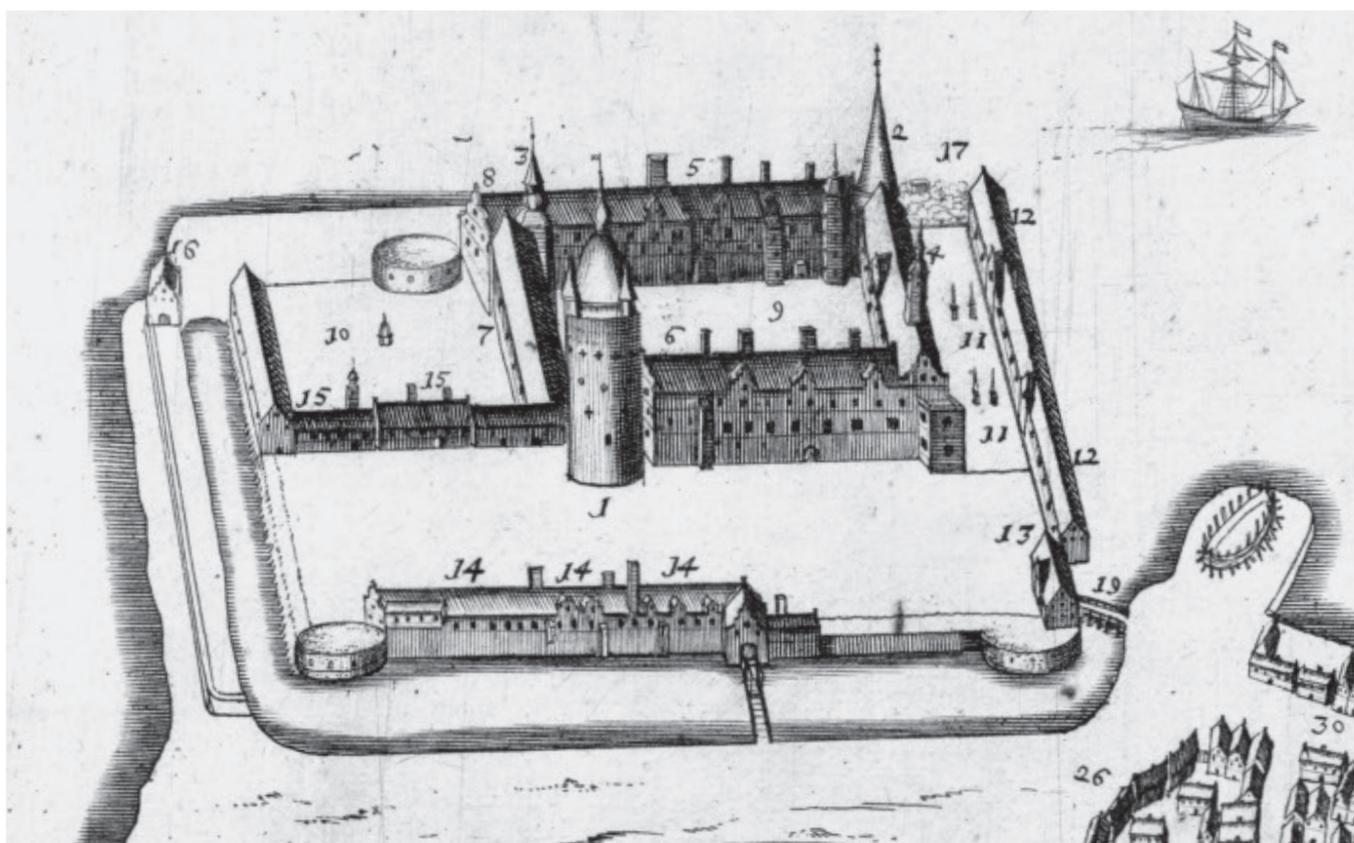
At Nordborg, the castle yard, stable yard, and farmyard were spatially close, much like a large private manor, in this case all situated on a small is-



5.5a | Nordborg Castle and market town shortly after the fire that destroyed the Renaissance palace in 1665 The ruins of the H-plan palace, with two surviving staircase towers, are on the top right. The farm buildings are to the west of it, on the other island; and in front of both are the gatehouse and service buildings. The later palace was built on the foundations of the service buildings, to the east of the gatehouse. (Scan by Museum of Southern Jutland. After Resen: Atlas Danicus)

land in a lake.¹⁶ Even after the fire of 1665, this arrangement was not fundamentally changed: the new palace was built on the foundations of a service building and the residential and service functions were largely merged, but all functions remained close to each other on the island. However, an architectural whole was not achieved beyond the fact that a gatehouse and bridge formed the common access.¹⁷

In Sønderborg, Hans the Younger moved the farm buildings around one kilometer from the castle in the late-sixteenth century. The castle was surrounded by service buildings and stables around a form of “stable yard” on three sides to form a lower yard. Although there was not a highly contrived architectural design, there was some sense of a totality.¹⁸ The related capital farm, on the other hand, was now separated from the castle. It was known as *Langenvorwerk*, and the word *Vorwerk*, like the Danish word *Ladegård*, signified the farm element of a *herregård*, but could also signify an outlying lordly farm with no residential buildings – as was the case with *Langenvorwerk*. Interestingly, the name *Langenvorwerk* not only applied to the farm buildings and fields farmed from them, but also to the associated district of peasant villages. In this way, the farm had been conceptually



5.5b | Sønderborg Castle, ca. 1670
 The main castle is surrounded by service buildings, while the farm is beyond the picture. (Scan by Museum of Southern Jutland. After Resen: Atlas Danicus)

elevated from the status of a dependency of the castle to that of a capital farm of its own, and the castle had been conceptually separated from both capital farm and dependent peasants.

At Augustenborg we see an interesting transition. The original Augustenborg had the layout of a typical Danish private manor with U-shaped farm buildings opening towards the ducal residence. This was a standard *herregård*. In 1733, the duke moved the farm buildings some 300 metres to the north, thus separating the farm from the palace, and started building an impressive stable yard where the farm had been. It was only finished in the 1760s as part of the grand building scheme at Augustenborg, when stable yard and castle yard came to form one large symmetrical scheme, consisting of two U-shaped building complexes, facing each other, of which the stable yard was wider, but lower.

Before the nineteenth century such a separation differed from the normal pattern of privately owned manors in Schleswig-Holstein, Denmark or northeast Germany, that normally retained a close spatial connection between residence and farm buildings even in the eighteenth century, but



it was more common at princely palaces. Hans the Younger may have separated farm and castle in Sønderborg for practical reasons, but at Augustenborg there can be little doubt that it was a deliberate step aimed at demonstrating the status of Augustenborg as a ducal palace rather than a noble manor, and from the 1770s, its grand layout clearly overshadowed anything else in Schleswig-Holstein.

Renaissance formal gardens were attached to the castles in the sixteenth century, the grandest in Sønderborg. At Nordborg, Glücksburg and Augustenborg baroque gardens were created in the early-eighteenth century, and towards the end of the century, Glücksburg and particularly Augustenborg were partly landscaped in the English style. The latter was the

5.6 | Augustenborg Palace

Stables and service buildings can be seen in front of, and to the right of, the palace.

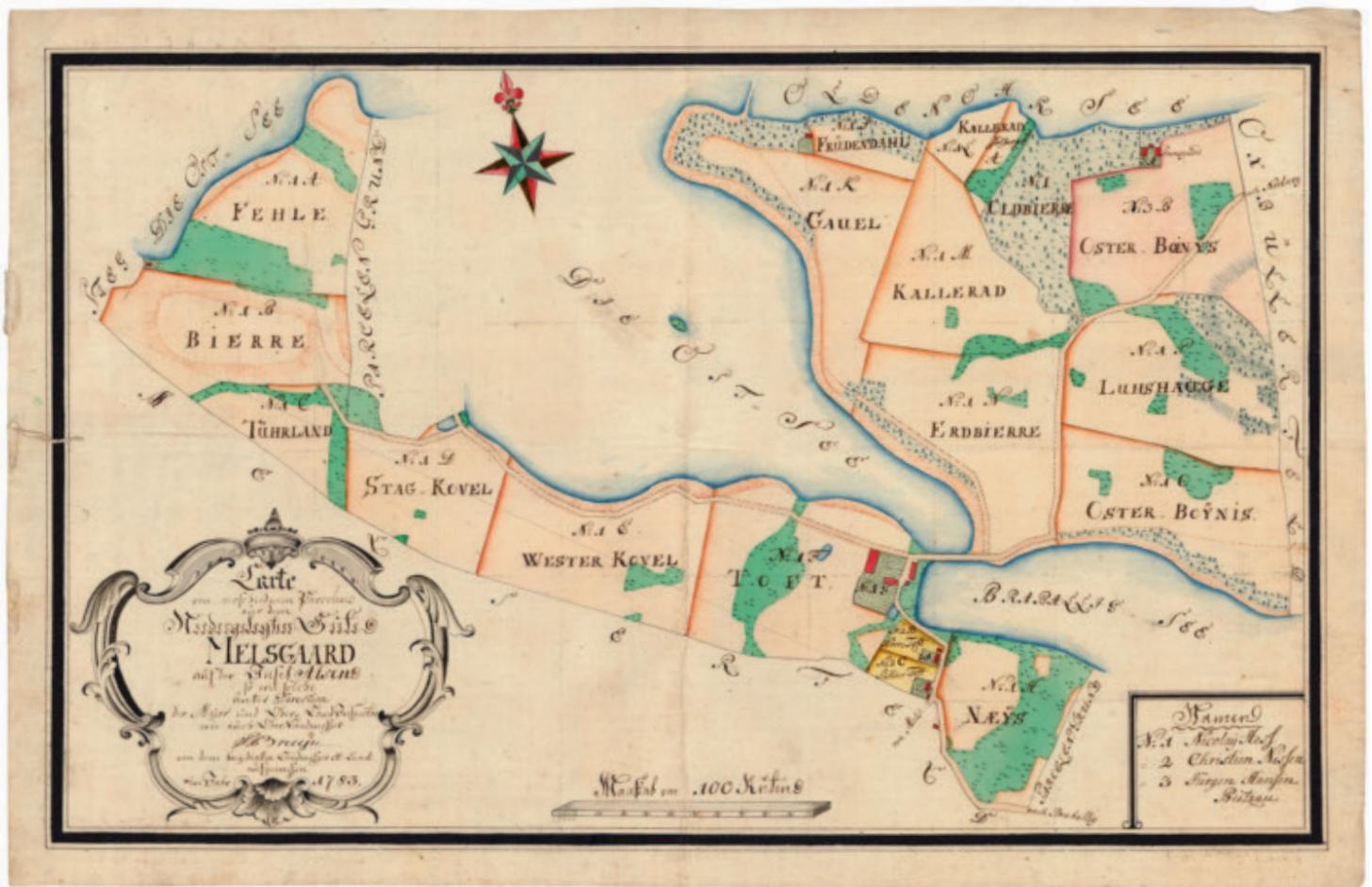
(Photo: H.H. Tholstrup)

grandest of the gardens and the only one to be placed in the ideal situation in relation to the palace: directly opposite the “cour basse” leaving the palace with a courtyard front to the east and a garden front to the west.¹⁹

Sønderborg Castle was situated in a town, whilst at Nordborg a small village was gradually transformed into a small borough with a semi-urban character. A similar small town also emerged around Augustenborg. It comprised only two major streets, one being the prolongation of the axis through the stable yard, palace and garden, the other running parallel further north. Augustenborg was not particularly large in comparison to the largest villages of the island, but was very different in form as it contained no farms or farmers. It was populated, on the one hand by people in the direct service of the duke, and on the other, by a small number of craftsmen, shopkeepers and inn-keepers. It had thus more of an urban character and can best be seen as a miniature version of the new residential towns around many German baroque palaces that were built outside old towns. It was hardly a planned settlement, but it was particular to Augustenborg.²⁰ Only two private Danish manors – Tranekær and Schackenborg – had similar estate villages and these were not of the same scale.²¹ The dukes’ staff and the needs of the court were the economic foundation for the settlement, and the dukes’ privileges made it possible to develop without being prevented by authorities defending the monopoly rights of chartered towns. This too was part of establishing Augustenborg as a princely residence rather than a noble manor.

Capital Farms

Hans the Younger established a series of large farms functioning as capital farms in the last decades of the sixteenth century. At his death, there were ten on the island of Als and four in Sundeved, the two areas of particular interest here, whilst his sons and grandsons added another six. Much of the farmland for these capital farms came from appropriated peasant farms, and whole villages were deserted in the process. Of the twenty capital farms and their dependencies, two became private manors after the bankruptcy of the dukes of Sønderborg and Nordborg, whereas the other eighteen remained parts of the estates of Sønderborg, Nordborg, Glücksburg or Augustenborg. In addition to these capital farms came another four (smaller) lordly farms. They were not capital farms as they had no dependent peasant districts, but functioned as subsidiary demesnes within other manors.



The capital farms were large, by any standard. The thirteen capital farms in Als were generally between 200–400 hectares, with the largest containing 560 hectares. The Glücksburg capital farms in Sundeved were 150–180 hectares, and only the subsidiary demesnes without pertaining districts were more modest with between 50–80 hectares. Compared to the 20–25 hectares of the average peasant farms of the area, the capital farms in Als were equivalent to 10–20 farms, those in Sundeved 6–8, and the subsidiary demesnes only 2–4 farms. The size of the capital farms in Als was equal to private manors in south-eastern Schleswig-Holstein and other areas of eastern Germany, whereas those in Sundeved were more like Danish capital farms.²²

The capital farms and other demesnes were created with the clear objective of large-scale food production. Hans the Younger was engaged in oxen rearing for beef, as well as grain production, but from the second half of the seventeenth century, the capital farms concentrated on grain and

5.7 | Mjelsgård 1783 map of the fields of the capital farm of Mjelsgård by Johann Bruyn. The fields were divided into a dozen regular units ('kopler'). The green areas are meadows, the pale blue forestland. The farmlands were situated on both sides of a small bay. (Map at the Danish National Archives, Rigsarkivet)

dairy products. Both were on a very large scale and demesnes were very significant sources of income for the dukes. The farm work was largely done through the unpaid labour service of dependent peasants, which became a considerable burden on top of the old rent due in kind. In the second half of the seventeenth century both dukes and the royal administration also tried to increase money rents. The strategy was one of dividing peasants into two groups, one of which performed high labour service and paid relatively low cash rents, while the other group paid high cash rents but owed little in the way of labour service. Consequently, manorial income consisted of a mixture of profits from the capital farms and the rents paid by peasants.

The relative weight of demesne income and labour service on one hand, and rents in money and kind on the other, differed from manor to manor and was closely connected to the proportion of demesne land. In general, demesnes (capital farms and secondary lordly farms) covered c. 15–25 % of the agricultural land on the estates of Als and Sundeved, but higher proportions were found on individual manors. This proportion was equivalent to that on private manors in eastern Denmark, but was considerably below eastern Schleswig-Holstein where 50% was common. Compared to the general region of *Gutsherrschaft* in northeastern Europe, it was within the range found there, but at the lower end.²³ The fields of the capital farms of Als were the same size as the fields of average villages on the island and were initially the same in organization and visual appearance. In the seventeenth century the famous *Koppelwirtschaft* was established on most demesnes of private manors in Schleswig-Holstein in order to increase agricultural output. It meant the division of the land on these large farms into between 9 and 14 individual enclosed fields of similar size surrounded by permanent fences and a crop rotation where a number of years with grain were followed by several years of continuous use as pasture.²⁴ The system also came to prevail in Als and Sundeved, though in an irregular form with variable numbers and sizes of fields. At the Augustenborg estates, it was only during the age of reform in the late-eighteenth century that a greater regularity was achieved. Nonetheless, this layout of fields with its permanent fences and separation into about a dozen fields differed significantly from that of open field villages. The distinct character of the manorial system therefore left a visual imprint on parts of the landscape and was instantly recognizable.

The buildings of the capital farms had to be appropriate for the size of the fields and so they too stood out from peasant villages. In Als and Sun-



deved, the difference was greater still, as the layout of buildings on capital farms followed the general pattern of manors in Schleswig-Holstein, while the peasant farms followed a more local or regional tradition. In Denmark and northeastern Germany capital farms were organized with the buildings surrounding one or more yards and a close spatial and visual connection between residential and farm buildings. Indeed, the Danish seventeenth-century economist Arent Berntsen argued in his work on manorial economy that the farmyard should always be organized in such a way as to give the lord a free view of everything going on from his rooms.²⁵

In Denmark and Scania, the main farm buildings of capital farms were attached and adopted a U-shaped formation, with the lord's house standing at some distance on the open side. With the exception of this latter fact, it was an enlarged version of the Danish peasant farm. In Schleswig-Holstein and much of northern and eastern Germany, the farm buildings would also be organized around a yard, but the barn, cow house and other major farm

5.8 | The great barn at the capital farm of Augustenborg The barn was built in 1733. It is a large and broad building with a mighty roof, in the Holstein tradition. Loaded wagons could drive through the whole length of the barn on both sides, as indicated by the gates. The sheaves were then stored in the great room in the middle. (Photo: Søren Petersen/Museum of Southern Jutland)

buildings were detached and the yard generally larger and more open.²⁶ It was the latter system that prevailed in Als and Sundeved; however, the exact layout differed. Gammelgaard, for example, the largest of all the farms, was set out around three classic yards of the ideal large Danish manor (see Fig. 5.1), while in others the tendency was rather for all the buildings to surround one large square.

Most of the capital farms were primarily agricultural units. The principal buildings were barns and cattle houses, and they were built according to Holstein ideals: large, very broad and with enormous roofs. They were the most obvious feature of most of these farms, whilst some of the lesser buildings followed the Danish or regional pattern with longer, narrow structures.

In the sixteenth century the ducal presence manifested itself through ornamented and “grand” buildings present in the landscape to varying degrees. There were the principal ducal seats at Nordborg, Sønderborg and Glücksburg, but at least two and possibly three capital farms also comprised renaissance-style residences which resembled the main buildings of larger noble estates and later came to serve as secondary residences or dowager houses of the different ducal lines. Around 1600, Hans the Younger also had houses built on other capital farms that served mainly as dwellings for bailiffs and staff, but also seem to have contained rooms for the duke when he visited.

Later the function of capital farms as ducal residences vanished completely. The two most representative houses were demolished in the 1730s, and almost all other capital farms had lost residential functions long before. As the lords withdrew from any sort of residential use of these capital farms, the tenant farmers running them rose in status, and in the eighteenth century residences of a certain representative character were built for them by the kings and dukes on several capital farms. The finest of them clearly stood out from peasant buildings in size and form and were similar to vicarages or the residences of small manors.

In this way, capital farms remained large production units under ducal ownership, but from the eighteenth century onwards they lost their elite residential function. Such farms were not typical of Danish manors, but there were parallels. On the one hand, a large number of secondary capital farms (*Vorwerke/Meierhöfe*) were emerging on many manors in Schleswig-Holstein and further east, created as agricultural units, but not residential ones, and on the other hand, some Danish *herregårde* were becoming

part of larger estates and were thus of a similar status. Still, the Danish and north German nobleman or lord would have his residence and seat at a *herregård*, where the grand house was in direct connection with the farm production and the farm buildings across the courtyard. The spatial separation of the castles and palaces with their adjoining gardens, stables and service buildings, from the actual farm production in three of the 'dukeries' (Glücksburg being the third) was highly unusual, both in a Danish and a north German context, and can only be explained by the fact that the owners were princes.

Peasant Society

Peasant society made up by far the greater part of the dukeries. Over 90% of the population were peasants, and 75–90% of the land was associated with the peasant villages. The area was completely dominated by highly regulated villages with open or common fields, where each farm had a large number of strips regularly distributed across the fields in addition to proportionate rights of grazing and other resources.

Peasant families were divided into three groups depending on their relation to land and lords. The core of peasant society were the tenant farmers, locally known as *bolsmænd*. In Als and Sundeved the farm structure was very stable, and farms tended to be of fairly equal size. When all land was separated and enclosed in the late-eighteenth century, the average tenant farm received between 20–30 hectares. The second group were the cottagers or *kådnere* who held cottages and were direct tenants of the lord. Some of them held a little land, but generally they had only some grazing rights on the common fields. Finally we have the renters or *inderster* who were not tenants of the duke or king, but rented rooms or small houses from other peasants. The tenant farmers and cottagers paid rent and performed labour service to the dukes, whereas the *inderster* only paid a small "recognition" to the duke, but rent to peasants.

The peasants of the area were free of bondage. There were attempts to claim bondage by princes in the area during times of crisis around 1660, but these efforts largely failed and the royal government refused to recognize bondage in the area.²⁷ This is contrary to most noble manors in Schleswig-Holstein where second serfdom emerged. Tenure was also more favourable than on most private manors. Formally, the peasants of the region held their land in two different forms of tenure: about a third were of-

ficially freeholders, and the others tenants, but in reality both groups were hereditary tenants with only marginal differences in rights and dues. Ducal policies furthered the *de facto* development of hereditary tenure.

Hereditary tenure resembled the royal districts of Schleswig-Holstein, but differed from private manors in both Schleswig-Holstein and Denmark where tenure was at best for life.²⁸ One effect of these relatively favourable terms was that of creating relatively sharp distinctions between the classes of farmers and cottagers, leaving little possibility for a cottager's son to rise to the rank of farmer. The farmers of the region were generally not as wealthy as those of royal districts, but nor were they deeply impoverished like many farmers in areas of harsher *Gutsherrschaft*.

Peasants, cottagers and *inderster* lived side-by-side in the villages. The average village of the region comprised between 10 and 20 farms with additional cottages. This was much like eastern Denmark, but on a larger scale than eastern Schleswig-Holstein and northeastern Germany where smaller villages were more typical.²⁹ These villages and their farming were regulated by village bylaws. In most of Schleswig bylaws were decided by the peasants themselves, but in the dukeries most bylaws were issued by dukes, and transgressions were punished both by the village and the duke. The content, nonetheless, differed little from that of bylaws established by the peasants in neighbouring regions.

In general, the duke's imprint on peasant society was not very visible in the landscape. Largely they can be said to have supported and conserved an existing social structure through the preservation of the structure of farms. Nor was there much ducal imprint on peasant buildings and fields. Until the age of reform in the late-eighteenth century, field structures appear to have changed little, and buildings followed a regional pattern, clearly differing from those of the dukes' capital farms. Peasant farms followed a regional pattern consisting of very long buildings – often 40–50 metres – with most functions in successive sections. The layout of the peasant farms also clearly differed from that of capital farms, with the buildings being placed in a very different pattern.

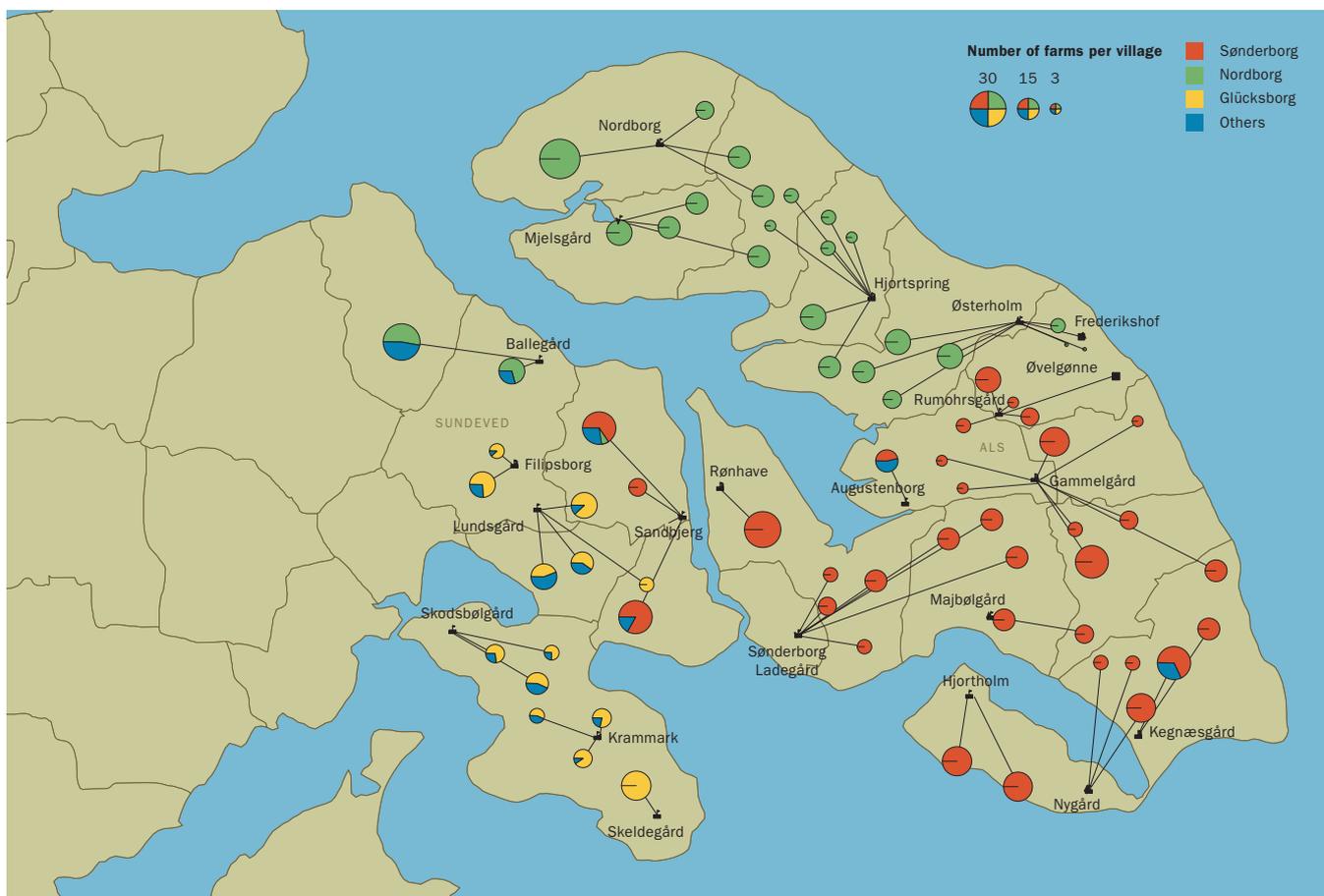
Authority and Administration

The dukeries united virtually all titles of legal authority. They were the agents of the state responsible for taxation and conscription, they held extensive judicial powers, and they had considerable authority over local

churches and schools. High ranking officials had a central role in the working of these estate societies. In principle there were two top officials, the *forvalter* or steward, who ran the economic and practical affairs of the estate or duchy, and the *herredsfoged* or sheriff, who was in charge of judicial matters. In some cases the offices were combined – rather ironically primarily under royal rule, whereas the “private” estates of the dukes of Augustenborg had a clearer separation of these two lines of administration.

In the more economic aspects, the peasants were divided into manors each pertaining to a capital farm. From the mid-seventeenth century the capital farms were often leased out for between six and twelve years, considerably less than the tenure of peasants. The lease not only comprised the land and buildings, but also the labour service of peasants and in some cases their rents in kind as well. In this way the peasants were subject to an authority spatially centred on the capital farm and delegated by the princes to a tenant as a purely economic arrangement. Other parts of the authority remained with the estate stewards, notably everything connected with tenure and sometimes also rents. The legal authority always rested with princely officials, and spatially it comprised either the whole “dukery” or a number of manors.³⁰ There were in this way both different spatial levels of lordly authority – the individual manor, the whole estate, or the legal district – and different groups of people to whom authority was delegated in different ways. Stewards and sheriffs were in the service of the lords, whereas the tenants of capital farms gained authority through a business arrangement. In either case they were important intermediaries. In many ways these people, who were central for the running of feudal society, might be seen to represent a bourgeois class.

Trusted peasants also filled the role of other types of intermediaries. The *sandemænd* had various tasks in the legal system as surveyors, evaluators and jury members in serious legal cases. The office was of high esteem and brought with it an income. It was held until death or old age, and often son succeeded father. Other offices, such as the village leader, who mediated in questions of labour service, or the *vrøger*, who acted as the local constable reporting transgressions to higher authorities, were only held for one or a few years and were seen as less attractive posts. This whole system of authority upheld the social order of which some parts were clearly more accepted by peasants than other. There was support for the prosecution of serious crimes, and many conflicts within peasant society were addressed. Sometimes it had mainly the character of general disciplinary measures



5.9 | Map of Als and Sundeved ca. 1665 The circles on the map are the villages, graduated by number of peasant farms, while the small black squares represent the capital farms. The map further shows the two layers of estate existing here. The colours of green, red and yellow represent the 'dukeries' of Nordborg, Sønderborg and Glücksborg, as they were around 1665. The individual manors are illustrated by lines connecting the villages to the capital farm to which they pertained. (Map by the author based upon estate registers from the mid-seventeenth century)

initiated from above, whilst at other time the systems of authority were called upon by the peasants themselves.

However, there were also matters in which we see peasants more generally challenging the rules of the lords and a great number of peasants were punished repeatedly.³¹ The most common of these "social crimes" were neglecting labour service or felling trees without permission, but others included illegal inns or feasting. Certain prohibitions of feasts, festivals and celebrations were laws imposed from above and they were met with little respect from below. Transgressions in such matters were punished, but not very severely. One social crime was however viewed very differently – poaching. Punishments were draconian: the hunt monopoly was a privilege and a matter of prestige to the dukes, but both the deer and the hunting parties were highly despised by peasants.

Largely, these patterns confirm what we find in other places.³² Compared to smaller manors, the dukeries had a more complex system of intermediaries, and there appears to have been a stronger tendency to treat conflicts and transgressions according to formal rules rather than the personal will and mercy of the lord. As an example, unmarried women who became pregnant were punished according to the fury of the law in the dukeries of Sønderborg and Nordborg, whilst women in the same situation had their punishments considerably reduced as a consequence of lordly grace in the Danish manor of Clausholm.

Conclusions

The “dukeries” around Sønderborg are in many ways an unusual case, and they are not easy to place on a simple scale of *Gutsherrschaft*. The demesne economy, normally seen as the heart of such a system, was rather mild in a north German context, but somewhat harsh in a Danish one. The intensity of lordly legal powers was very high, but contrary to what was generally the case on private manors in Schleswig-Holstein, the peasants nonetheless had a status of personal liberty and favourable tenure. This is a fairly unusual mix. The estates were large compared to most private manors in Denmark and Germany. As a consequence, they functioned on two levels – one around each capital farm, and one comprising the whole “dukery” – and they were run by a complex network of intermediaries. We have a clear case of delegated lordship. A further consequence of the size of the estates and the status of their owners was the tendency to separate the residence from the farm – contrary to the standard model of the Scandinavian (and particularly the Danish) *herregård* or northern and eastern German Gut.

If we look at the way these estates dominated their landscapes, they left a very clear visual imprint through the fields and buildings of the large capital farms, but they were clearly formed according to functional considerations. Indirectly, they were nonetheless forceful expressions of lordship, but it is not easy to find very many deliberate ornamental or symbolic expressions of power within them. These were largely reserved for palaces and castles and their immediate surroundings. Arguably, the real power over peasants and landscapes was so strong and so obvious from the large capital farms that the symbolic energies could be reserved for those central places expressing the status of the dukes.

These ducal estates could be dismissed as peculiarities in relation to the general manorial landscapes of Denmark and northern and eastern Germany, but that would be missing an opportunity of understanding. Indeed, the separation of residence, farming, and lordship – the basic functions of a *herregård* – in this case can enhance our understanding of their general integration, if we use a comparative approach. In some ways, as a partial exception to the general model, the dukeries can help identify the character of that model which is otherwise easily overlooked, as it is so obvious in a Danish or German context. Besides that, they are a point of departure for the study of the large estates as the exceptions to the majority of smaller estates which are predominant in Scandinavia and most of northern and eastern Germany.

Notes

- 1 The empirical evidence about the "dukeries" of Sønderborg can be found in Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: *Hertuggodser: Storgodssamfund på Als og Sundeved fra 1500-tallet til 1800-tallet*. Sønderborg. 2016.
- 2 Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: "Hvad er en herregård? – et historisk svar", in: Britta Andersen and Hele Kjærboel (eds.): *Herregårde, Jordegods, Herlighed: Tanker fra Gammel Estrup*. Auning. 2005a, pp. 83-92; Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: "Gård og gods", in: John Erichsen and Mikkel Venborg Pedersen (eds.): *Herregården. Menneske – Samfund – Landskab – Bygninger*, Vol. 1: Gods og samfund. Copenhagen. 2004-06. Reprinted Copenhagen. 2009, pp. 171-75; Ulväng, Göran: "Betydelsen av att äga en herrgård: Herrgårdar, ståndsgårdar och gods i Uppsala län under 1700- och 1800-talen", in: *Historisk Tidskrift för Finland* 2013/98, pp. 292-95; *Svensk Etymologisk Ordbok s.v. säteri*.
- 3 Olsen, Gunnar: *Hovedgård og bondegård. Studier over stordriftens udvikling i Danmark i tiden 1525-1774*. København. 1957, pp. 54-65; Jutikkala, Eino: *Bonden – Adelsmanden – Kronan: Godspolitik och jordegendomsförhållanden i Norden 1550-1770*. København. 1979, pp. 20-21 and 23-24; Nilsson, S. A.: *Krona och frälse i Sverige 1523-1594*. Lund. 1947, 185-225; Weidling, Tor: *Adelsøkonomi i Norde fra reformasjonstiden og fram mot 1660*. Oslo. 1998, pp. 176-77.
- 4 Olsen 1957, *Hovedgård og bondegård*, pp. 66-71; Ulväng 2013, "Betydelsen af att äga", p. 302
- 5 Ulväng 2013, "Betydelsen av at äga", p. 297; Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: *Det sønderjyske langbrugs historie 1544-1830*. Aabenraa. 2013, pp. 84-90; Porskrog Rasmussen 2004, "Gård og gods", pp. 167-71. "Bondegård" as peasant farm is a gradual development. The original meaning of *Bondegård* is the farm of a yeoman, but the later meaning was already established in the seventeenth century, see Berntsen, Arent: *Danmarckis oc Norgis Fructbar Herlighed*. Copenhagen. 1656. Reprinted Copenhagen. 1971, p. 10.
- 6 Porskrog Rasmussen 2004, "Gård og gods", pp. 163-65.
- 7 Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: *Rentegods og hovedgårdsdrift: Godsstrukturer og godsøkonomi i hertugdømmet Slesvig 1524-1770*. Aabenraa. 2003, pp. 335-36, 340-41 and 364-65.
- 8 *Beschreibung und generaler Anschlag des in dem Herzogthum Schleswig im sogenannten Dänischen Wohlde belegen Adelichen Guthes Noer und des dazu Gehörigen Adelichen Guthes Grünwald* 1764.
- 9 The word *Gutshof* does not appear in the great dictionary of the German language by Joachim Heinrich Campe from 1808, but it does in that of the brothers Grimm from 1854-56. This fits well my experience with other sources.

- 10 Overviews of the research in Kaak, Heinrich: *Die Gutsherrschaft: Theoriegeschichtliche Untersuchungen zum Agrarwesen in ostelbischen Raum*. Berlin. 1991; Cerman, Markus: *Villagers and Lords in Eastern Europe, 1300-1800*. Basingstoke. 2012.
- 11 Cerman 2012, *Villagers and Lords*, pp. 10-13.
- 12 Cerman 2012, *Villagers and Lords*, pp. 29-32.
- 13 Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: "Indledning", in: Inge Adriansen and Lennart S. Madsen (eds.): *De slesvigske hertuger*. Aabenaa. 2005, pp. 11-21; Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: "Abgeteilte Herren: Status und Handlungsraum der Herzöge von Plön", in: Oliver Auge, Silke Hunzinger and Detlev Kraack (eds.): *Die Herzöge von Plön*. Plön. 2017, pp. 125-31.
- 14 Adriansen, Inge and Peter Dragsbo: *Fem Fyrsteslotte: Sønderborg, Nordborg, Augustenborg, Gråsten og Glücksborg*. Sønderborg. 2011, pp. 13-106.
- 15 Berntsen 1971, *Danmarckis oc Norgis Fructbar Herlighed*, p. 7.
- 16 See plan in Resen, Peder Hansen: *Atlas Danicus, vol V: Lolland-Falster, Langeland, Tåsinge, Ærø, Als*. Odense. 1987. Here the Renaissance palace was already in ruins, but the disposition of buildings is clear.
- 17 See plan and prospect in Dragsbo, Peter: "Hertugerne af Nordborg", in: Carsten Porskrog Rasmussen, Inge Adriansen and Lennart S. Madsen (eds.): *De slesvigske hertuger*. Aabenraa. 2005, pp. 212 and 219.
- 18 Slettebo, Jørgen: *Sønderborg Slot*. Sønderborg. 1975, pp. 98-102.
- 19 Adriansen and Dragsbo 2011, *Fem Fyrsteslotte*, pp. 107-32; Paulsen, Jørgen: *Augustenborg. Slottet. Flækken. Fyrstehuset*. København. 1981, pp. 27-29.
- 20 Adriansen and Dragsbo 2011, *Fem Fyrsteslotte*, pp. 133-61; Paulsen 1981, *Augustenborg*, pp. 49-79.
- 21 Iversen, Peter Kr.: "Træk af Møgeltønders historie", in: Bue Beck et al (eds.): *Møgeltønder – slotsby og bondeby*. Tønder. 1985, pp. 21-25; Ravn, Helle: *Tranekær – et slot og en by*. Rudkøbing. 2010, pp. 108-9 and 118-21.
- 22 Danish standards: Pedersen, Henrik: "Nogle Træk til Belysning af Hovedgaardens drift i sidste Halvdel af det 17de Aarhundrede", in: *Historisk Tidsskrift* 1915/6, pp. 9-22; Eastern Schleswig-Holstein; Porskrog Rasmussen 2003, *Rentegods og hovedgårdsdrift*, pp. 363-502; Prange, Wolfgang: "Das Adlige Gut in Schleswig-Holstein im 18. Jahrhundert", in: C. Degn and D. Lohmeier (eds.): *Staatsdienst und Menschlichkeit: Studien zur Adelskultur des späten 18. Jahrhundert in Schleswig-Holstein und Dänemark*. Neumünster. 1980, pp. 62-64.
- 23 Cerman 2012, *Villagers and lords*, pp. 61-70; Schacke, Adam Tybjerg: *Gods, gårde og kulturlandskab: Besiddelsesforhold og godsstruktur i den sydlige del af Nørrejylland 1570-1788*. Auning. 2007, pp. 226-31 and 348-50, etc.

- 24 Porskrog Rasmussen 2013, *Det sønderjyske landbrugs historie*, pp. 306-11;
Porskrog Rasmussen, Carsten: "Innovative Feudalism: The Development of Dairy Farming and Koppelwirtschaft on Manors in Schleswig-Holstein in the Seventeenth and Eighteen Centuries", in: *Agriculture History Review* 2010/58, pp. 180-85.
- 25 Berntsen 1971, *Danmarckis oc Norgis Fructbar Herlighed*, p. 7.
- 26 Lange, Ulrich: *Ekonomibyggnader på skånska herregårdar: Idéhistoriska speglingar i lantbrukets arkitektur*. Stockholm. 2008, pp. 56-60; Lafrentz, Deert: *Gutshöfe und Herrenhäuser in Schleswig-Holstein*. Petersborg. 2015, pp. 21-29 plus numerous small maps throughout the book.
- 27 Porskrog Rasmussen 2003, *Rentegods og hovedgårdsdrift*, p. 542.
- 28 Porskrog Rasmussen 2013, *Det Sønderjyske Landbrugs Historie*, pp. 202-14 and 320-25; Porskrog Rasmussen 2003, *Rentegods og hovedgårdsdrift*, pp. 531; Løgstrup, Birgit: *Bundet til jorden: Stavnsbåndet i Praksis 1733-1788*. Odense. 1988, pp. 9-45; Skrubbeltrang, Fridley: *Det danske Landbosamfund 1500-1800*. København. 1978, pp. 70-91, 152-74 and 214-34.
- 29 Porsmose, Erland: *Danske Landsbyer*. København. 2008, pp. 56-59.
- 30 Sønderborg was divided into two legal districts before 1764, Augustenborg after 1764.
- 31 About social crimes, see Knepper, Paul: *Writing the History of Crime*. New York. 2015, pp. 98-102.
- 32 Similar examples in Mager, Friedrich: *Entwicklungsgeschichte der Kulturlandschaft des Herzogtums Schleswig-Holstein in historischer Zeit. Erster Band. Entwicklungsgeschichte der Kulturlandschaft auf der Geest und im östlichen Hügelland des Herzogtums Schleswig bis zue Verkoppelung*. Breslau. 1930, pp. 222-38 (felling of trees); Hiller, Hubertus: *Untertanen und obrigkeitliche Jagd: Zu einem konflikträchtigen Verhältnis in Schleswig-Holstein zwischen 1600 und 1848*. Neumünster. 1992 (poaching); Lyngholm, Dorte Kook: *Godsejeres rent: Adelsens retshåndhævelse I 1700-tallet – lov og praksis ved Clausholm birkeret*. Auning. 2013, pp. 90-127 and 144-62 (conflicts in peasant society, the functioning of lordly legal authority).

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